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SUBJECT: ICRC CLOSES IN CROATIA, BUT SEARCH FOR THE MISSING  
CONTINUES

¶1. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) formally closed its door in Croatia on April 13, after being present in the country for more than 15 years. Although its regional office in Budapest will continue to follow developments in tracing missing persons in Croatia, the ICRC database and its activities have been transferred on to the Croatian Red Cross.

¶2. There are still 2046 persons registered as missing with the Bureau of POWs and Missing Persons of the Ministry for Veterans Affairs: 1116 represent direct inquiries by families who have approached the government (mainly Croats), while the remaining 930 (mainly Croatian Serbs) have been registered on the basis of ICRC data and exchange of information through government cooperation with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¶3. Visnja Bilic of the Government Bureau told the Embassy that cooperation with Serbian and Bosnian counterparts was friendly and professional. She also said the GOC is engaged in a joint project with Sarajevo-based International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) aimed at collecting blood samples from relatives of the missing persons and exchanging sample data among the three countries. Over five thousand sample reports have thus been exchanged, resulting in 85 positive identifications.

BRADTKE